



CONSULAR CORNER

ISSUE VIII MARCH 2014

Ambassador's Message:



Greetings,

Happy New Year from me and all of my staff here at U.S. Embassy Tbilisi!

I am looking forward to a very exciting year here in the country of Georgia. For those of you who have been in country for some time, you have experienced another historic democratic election in this past year. If you are new to Georgia, please be sure that we are included in your telephone and address contact lists.

U.S. Citizen Services is of paramount importance to me. Our Consul and Consular staff are conscientious and excel in the services that help you regarding passports, notaries, social security, U.S. Consular Reports of Birth Abroad, emergency messages and warden assignments.

The best way to know about consular services and to receive emergency messages during your stay in Georgia is to register in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Plan ([STEP](#)). This program plays an important role in keeping U.S. citizens traveling abroad safe and informed.

Before the next issue of the Consular Corner, we will celebrate Georgian Memorial Day (April 9), Good Friday (April 18), and Easter Monday (April 21). The Embassy will be closed for those holidays. The U.S. Citizen Services [online](#) appointment system reflects these holiday closures.

In this edition of the newsletter you will find information regarding careers with the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of State's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) Crime and Safety Report, U.S. federal and state income taxes, the Affordable Care Act and U.S. Citizens Abroad, and procedural changes when applying for a passport for a minor under the age of 16.

Enjoy the rest of the winter and here is to a mild spring!

Sincerely,

Ambassador Richard B. Norland



Q: How will the Affordable Care Act affect U.S. citizens living abroad?

A: Many U.S. citizens abroad have contacted U.S. embassies and consulates to find out the implications of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) for U.S. citizens residing abroad. U.S. citizens living abroad are generally subject to the same individual shared responsibility provision as U.S. citizens living in the United States.

Starting in 2014, the individual shared responsibility provision calls for each individual to have minimum essential coverage (MEC) for each month, qualify for an exemption, or make a payment when filing his or her federal

income tax return. However, U.S. citizens or residents living abroad for at least 330 days within a 12-month period are treated as having MEC during those 12 months, and thus will not owe a shared responsibility payment for any of those 12 months. Also, U.S. citizens who qualify as a bona fide resident of a foreign country for an entire taxable year are treated as having MEC for that year.

Public questions should be directed to the [Health and Human Services](#) (HHS) and [Internal Revenue Service](#) (IRS) web pages and the travel.state.gov Federal Benefits Federal Agencies page Affordable Care Act link <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go.html>.

Q: What do I do if my passport is lost or stolen?

A. Contact American Citizen Services (ACS) for assistance. We assure you that every effort will be made to assist you quickly. If you are scheduled to leave the country, please, provide ACS with details regarding your departure schedule. You will need to present a DS-11 application for a passport/passport card, a DS-64 statement of loss (do not sign this document until you are in the presence of a consular officer), photos, and a copy of the police report filed for your lost, or stolen passport. Please see [page 5](#) of this newsletter for updated information when applying for a minor under the age 16 passport.

Q: Do U.S. Citizens and U.S. legal permanent residents who live abroad have to pay U.S. federal and state taxes?

A: Working and living overseas does not exempt you from filing a U.S. tax return, although much of your income may be exempt. The IRS has developed several tools to help you this tax season? The brochure 4732, Federal Tax Information for U.S. Taxpayers Living Abroad is available [here](#). This page contains basic tax information that Americans overseas need to know and also includes links to more detailed topics, such as the foreign earned income exclusion, foreign tax credit, reporting foreign bank accounts, Fulbright grants, state taxes, and a myriad of others. Rather than navigating through www.irs.gov, this page will provide “one stop shopping” for U.S. citizens abroad. The site also provides information on how to contact the IRS to get additional assistance.





Click here to view [CONSUL'S PODCAST](#)
on American Citizen Services on
YouTube



Emergency Contact: (995 32) 227-7000

**Includes Crime Victims, Arrest, Death, Child Abduction, Life
Threatening Illness or Medical Conditions, Lost/Stolen U.S.
Passport, or other safety and welfare issues of a U.S. citizen.**

HOURS OF OPERATION & CONTACT INFORMATION

U.S. Citizen Services are
available by appointment only. To
make an appointment for citizen ser-
vices please visit

[http://georgia.usembassy.gov/
service.html](http://georgia.usembassy.gov/service.html)

Address: # 11 George Balanchine Str.
0131 Tbilisi

Telephone: (995 32) 227-77-24
After hours emergency number:
(995 32) 227-70-00

E-mail:
askconsultbilisi@state.gov

Special Point of Interest:

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR U.S. CITIZENS !!!

In case of a crisis and/or natural disaster U.S. citizens in
Georgia may tune in to the following FM radio stations
for updated U.S. Embassy emergency messages and in-
formation for U.S. citizens:

- **Radio Green Wave- 107.4 FM (Tbilisi and Gori)**
- **Radio GIPA — 94.3 FM (Tbilisi)**
- **Radio Atinati — 105.9 FM (Zugdidi)**
- **Radio Hereti— 102.8 FM (Lagodekhi and Kakheti)**
- **Radio Dzveli Kalaki — 107.9 FM (Kutaisi)**
- **Radio Harmonia — 100.5 FM (Poti)**





U.S. Department of State Careers Telephone App

The U.S. Department of State has launched a new mobile app for those interested in Foreign Service careers. The app, available on Apple and Android devices, educates and engages Foreign Service candidates and others seeking to familiarize themselves with diplomatic careers. The DOSCareers app offers essential information right at the users' fingertips: Foreign Service Specialist and Officer career path descriptions, video interviews with diplomats, profiles of embassy life, information about selection and hiring processes, and more than 500 retired Foreign Service Officer Test questions which quiz your knowledge of topics including U.S. government and culture, world history, technology, and economics. You can also learn more about the opportunities and experiences of those who have chosen this career, as well as find a recruitment event. You can visit DOS Careers website at <http://careers.state.gov>.

For further information or to download the app please go to the Department's career page at:

<http://careers.state.gov/doscareers>.

Your career starts by visiting our website at www.careers.state.gov where you can explore who we are, what we're about, and more. It's also where you can register for the next Foreign Service Officer Test (FSOT).



All registrations for the Foreign Service Officer Test must be completed online [here](#). The registration package must be submitted at least 48 hours prior to the opening of the window. The test will be offered quarterly, each year, and registration for the FSOT will be open on a continuous basis. Checkout our Facebook page for testing dates here in Tbilisi.

- Applicants must be citizens of the United States.
- Applicants must be at least 20 years old
- Applicants must be available for worldwide assignment.
- No specific level in a foreign language is required for applicants.
- FSOT is offered at U.S. Embassy Tbilisi on a quarterly basis.



Important Passport Update !!!

The Department of State requires a Two-Parent Consent for all passports issued to minors under the age of 16. If one parent cannot be present when applying for the minor passport, there are two options. The [DS-3053](#) has been redesigned for use *solely* by the non-applying parent/guardian to notarize his/her consent to the issuance of a U.S. passport to his/her minor child under the age of 16. Concurrently, new form [DS-5525](#) was created for use by the applying parent to explain and establish a possible exigent or special family circumstance exception to the Two-Parent Consent requirement. For these forms and other minor passport issuance information [here](#) or visit our website [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the revised DS-3053 “Statement of Consent: Issuance of a U.S. Passport to a Minor Under Age 16”:

Q. Why was DS-3053 revised?

A. The Department has determined that splitting the old DS-3053 into two separate forms would promote clarity. The requirements for notarization of the statement of consent by the non-applying parent, photocopies of ID, exigent/special family circumstances, and identifying information for non-applying parents can now be provided through two separate forms based on the applicant's circumstances.

Q. What new information is required from the non-applying parent on the DS-3053?

A. The non-applying parent must provide his/her street address, telephone number, and email address.

Q. Are there any other changes?

A. The new DS-3053 contains an explanatory statement to remind the non-applying parent that he/she must sign the form in front of a licensed notary public. Additionally, the requirement of a photocopy of the front and back of the non-applying parent's identification document is highlighted where the non-applying parent must sign and date the form.

Frequently Asked Questions regarding the New DS-5525 “Statement of Exigent/Special Family Circumstances: Issuance of a U.S. Passport to a Minor Under Age 16”:

Q. Why was a decision made to separate this information from the non-applying parent's consent form?

A. The Department has determined that creating and structuring a new form solely devoted to the applying parent's statement of exigent/special family circumstances provided the Department the opportunity to gather more specific information regarding the exceptional situation and the non-applying parent, as well as allowing the applying parent to provide a better case for a waiver of the two-parent consent requirement.

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Important Passport Update !!!

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Q. What new information is required from the applying parent on the DS-5525?

A. The DS-5525 contains new items (fields) asking the applying parent to complete information regarding the non-applying parent's:

Name (including any aliases);

Date of birth; and,

His/her last known street address, telephone number, and email address.

Additionally, the new form specifically requires the applying parent to answer:

Whether there is a custody order regarding the minor applicant (if so, the form asks for a copy of it to be submitted); and,

Whether the non-applying parent is currently incarcerated (if so, the form asks where s/he is incarcerated and requests documentation regarding the incarceration).

Q. Why is the above information asked for?

A. The additional biographic and address information about the non-applying parent may help if there are inconsistencies found regarding the request for an exception to the two-parent consent requirement. The custody order question will provide the Department with information regarding any previous court adjudication on custody, and may, hopefully, reduce suspense of an application (by asking for the court order in advance because the parent mentions one in his/her statement on old DS-3053). The incarceration question similarly asks for information about one of the more common bases for exigent/special circumstances that the parent may not think to provide in a general statement.

Q. Are there any other changes?

A. Two final items on the DS-5525 specifically ask the applying parent for information that we need to know in order to consider waiving the two-parent consent requirement for the minor applicant. Item 9 asks for the number of attempts made to locate the non-applying parent in whereabouts unknown cases, including dates and outcome of these efforts. Item 10 asks whether the applying parent tried contacting the non-applying parent through a third party (family, attorney) and the name/contact information of that person.

This update and all information regarding passport issuances
can be found on our website at
<http://georgia.usembassy.gov>.

Traveling to Turkey Soon???

Beginning April 10, 2014, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs will no longer provide visas on arrival to foreign travelers. All foreigners must obtain their Turkish visas from Turkish missions abroad or from the e-visa application system www.evisa.gov.tr.

The e-visa system is only available to travelers entering Turkey for tourism or commerce. For any other purpose of travel, the applicant must obtain a Turkish visa in advance from a Turkish diplomatic or consular post. Diplomatic passport holders are not eligible for the e-visa system because the purpose of travel is always official, even if traveling for tourism.

Turkish visa requirements for citizens of the United States and Georgia have not changed:

- US: Ordinary and official passport holders are required to have visa to enter Turkey. The following are required for a visa application:
 - Original passport
 - A copy of bio page of passport
 - A copy of MFA accreditation card
 - Visa application form
 - 2 passport size (3/4) photos
- Georgia: Ordinary and official passport holders are exempted from visa for their travels up to 90 days.





PLEASE NOTE!!!

ACS UNIT WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ASSIST WITH VISA INQUIRIES
ALL VISA INQUIRIES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO THE CALL CENTER
LISTED ON THE LEFT. PLEASE NOTE ALL VISA APPLICATIONS ARE
ONLY ACCEPTED ONLINE. FOR THE VISA PROCESS PLEASE VISIT
WWW.USTRVELDOCS.COM

Contact Information for Visa Correspondence and Scheduling

Email: To reach a customer service representative email
support-georgia@ustraveldocs.com

Telephone: Contact a customer service representative using one of these
telephone numbers:

- **Callers in Georgia** Call +995 32 2471 160.
- **Callers in the United States** Call 703 988 7103.

NEW!! Visit [here](#) to get live chat assistance, track the status of your passport or application, or Skype with a representative during business hours.



To contact the
Consular section
during business hours

Call:
(995 32) 227-77-24

Email:
AskConsulTbilisi@state.gov

For after-hours
Emergencies call
(995 32) 227-70-00

Reminder: Appointments Required for Routine ACS Services

All of our American Citizen Services are available by appointment only. Visitors may receive multiple services during the same visit — please make a separate appointment for each service (e.g., to apply for passports and obtain a notary service, make two appointments). Arrive a few minutes before your appointment to allow time to go through security.

ACS appointments must be made using our website:
<http://georgia.usembassy.gov/service.html>

In case you need an emergency appointment please contact us via phone or email and we will try to accommodate your request at the earliest convenience.

The following services do not need an appointment and you may stop by the Consular any business day from 2 pm to 4 pm:

- * Report an emergency or urgent matter (e.g., death, hospitalization, or arrest of a U.S. citizen)
- * Report a lost or stolen passport
- * Pick up passports, Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA)
- * Pick up Social Security or tax refund checks



Leaving Georgia?

If you are departing Georgia and have been enrolled in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program ([STEP](#)), please do not forget to end your enrollment when you leave.

If you previously enrolled online, you can end your enrollment by visiting <https://step.state.gov/step/>. If you previously submitted a paper registration form at the U.S. Embassy Consular section in Tbilisi, you may unregister yourself by sending an email request to close your enrollment with the Embassy to:

askconsultbilisi@state.gov



REGIONAL TRAVEL?

Access emergency consular messages for the neighboring Embassies/Consulates:
<http://georgia.usembassy.gov/messages.html>

Please do not forget to enroll all your international trips in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program ([STEP](#)). Register once, then maintain your itineraries and active registrations with a few quick steps.

A Redesigned www.travel.state.gov

The Bureau of Consular Affairs has redesigned its website, www.travel.state.gov. Our goal is to make the experience better for users. Not only does our website have a new look—we are making the information that you want easy to access.



LOCAL UNITED STATES CITIZEN SKILLS/ RESOURCES SURVEY



U.S. citizens abroad may possess critical skills and resources invaluable for helping other U.S. citizens in a time of crisis. The Consular Section in Tbilisi would appreciate your assistance in identifying these skills and resources.

If you are interested in contributing information to the Consular “Skills Bank” please complete this survey and email a copy to askconsultbilisi@state.gov
We will keep your responses confidential.

Make Sure Your Vote Counts

U.S. VOTING IS NOW EASIER THAN EVER BEFORE!

Now all U.S. citizens can receive their blank ballots electronically. Depending on the state in which you are eligible to vote, you may get your ballot by email, fax, or internet download. To start, go to www.FVAP.gov to complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA), print and sign the form then return it to your local election office in the United States. Find more information:

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/abroad/legal-matters/benefits/voting.html>



U.S. citizen overseas voters can register to vote and request absentee ballots using the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) available at the Federal Voting Assistance Program’s website:

www.FVAP.gov. This online resource provides important information on absentee voting to help uniformed service members, their families, and other citizens living outside of the United States.





The U.S. State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) was established to promote security cooperation between American private sector interests worldwide (Private Sector) and the U.S. Department of State.

The OSAC Crime and Safety Report (CSR) is a summary of the security conditions at post. The report is prepared in a manner appropriate for public distribution. The CSR is shared with OSAC members, the public and often ends up in the media. The CSR is intended to educate our Private Sector partners on the crime and safety environments in specific countries. See the latest OSAC Crime and Safety Report [here](#).



Need a copy of your U.S. 2012 Federal Income Tax Return?

The IRS now allows US Citizens to download prior years' tax filings (called a "tax transcript") directly from their website, which should make things a little easier when needing to dig up these documents . You can find more information [here](#) on the IRS website.

**Follow Us on Social Media OR Get More Travel
Information by Selecting the Icons Below:**



<http://twitter.com/TravelGov>

<https://www.facebook.com/travelgov>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/statephotos>

<http://blogs.state.gov/>

<http://pinterest.com/consularcorner/>

<https://step.state.gov/step/>

[https://www.facebook.com/tbilisi.usembassy/
app_256579511063777](https://www.facebook.com/tbilisi.usembassy/app_256579511063777)

Facebook Q&A Sessions



On the first Friday of each month at 10:00 EDT, an expert from the Visa Office, in collaboration with the New Media Unit in CA/P, answers questions via the Consular Affairs Facebook Page www.Facebook.com/TravelGov.

FOCUS ON STAYING CONNECTED:

Sample Pinterest Hot Topics!



Children can enjoy CPSC's educational videos and interactive activities while learning about pool safety and family fun in the water.

From www.poolsafety.gov



The Federal government's official job list. Shown are employment search, information center, veteran information and forms.

From www.usajobs.gov

The Library of Congress presents



Discover the stories of America's past, like Buffalo Bill and Harriet Tubman; find out about interesting inventions and get fascinating historical facts.

From <http://www.americaslibrary.gov/>



The Public Broadcasting System (PBS) has [a new interactive learning tool](#) that lets 6-12th graders pretend to be a diplomat. The [overview blurb](#) reads, "U.S. Department of State employees, with their skills, character and commitment to public service, are the backbone of America's diplomacy. They represent the American people, advocate U.S. interests to the rest of the world and are America's first line of defense in a complex and often dangerous world." You can "Choose from five different career tracks – Economic, Management, Consular, Political and Public Diplomacy – and be whisked into the business of diplomacy, where the choices you make significantly impact the United States and its citizens."



The official benefits website of the U.S. government. Informs citizens of benefits they may be eligible for. Provides information on how to apply for assistance.

From www.benefits.gov

**Emergency-response center
112**

(Includes Patrol Police, Medical-Emergency Center, Fire and Rescue Services)

Information Centre

Tel: 118 09

Airport Hotline

Tel: +995 32 2310421;
+995 32 2310341

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LIST OF DOCTORS

LIST OF ATTORNEYS

No Doctors or Attorneys are affiliated with the U.S. Embassy and the lists are provided for informational purposes only.

CIVIL REGISTRY AGENCY

Issues residency permits, Georgian passports, civil documents, and Apostille on Georgian documents.

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

Information on Tourism activities, entertainment, cultural events.

E-map of Georgia



Important Security Announcement

When visiting the Embassy, please remember not to bring mobile phones or any electronic devices (such as Blackberries, iPods, or PDAs), food/drinks, medicine or cosmetic products, as they are not allowed within the Embassy. We also strongly advise that you do not bring large bags, such as backpacks, suitcases or packages to the interview as there are no storage facilities on Embassy grounds.

WE WELCOME YOUR IDEAS...

The U.S. Citizen Services Unit is constantly thinking of new ways to improve our service and efficiency.

If you have an idea or a suggestion about how we can make your visit easier or about items or subjects you'd like to see covered in this newsletter or future public broadcasts please let us know by email:

askconsultbilisi@state.gov

To remove your name from our mailing list, please [click here](#)